

REMARKS

Reconsideration of the application is respectfully requested.

Status of the Application

Claims 1-11 are currently pending. With this Response, Applicants cancel claims 2, 5, 6 and 8 without prejudice or disclaimer, amend claim 1 to essentially incorporate the limitations of canceled claim 8, and amend the specification and claims 1, 3, 4, 7 and 9-11 to address informalities. No new matter is added.

Objection to the Specification

The specification is objected to in regard to a number of informalities, and a substitute Specification is requested to address the informalities. Applicants enclose a substitute specification, both in “clean” and “marked-up” versions, and submit that the substitute specification both addresses the informalities and introduces no new matter. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully request that the substitute specification be entered, and that the objection to the specification be withdrawn.

Claim Rejections under 35 U.S.C. § 112

Claims 7 - 9 are rejected under the second paragraph of 35 U.S.C. § 112 as being indefinite. In particular, the Examiner finds that the claim terms “main rod” and “auxiliary rod” as use in these claims is confusing. Applicants cancel claim 8 without prejudice or disclaimer, and amend claim 1 to essentially include the limitations of canceled claim 8. Applicants further amend claims 1, 7 and 9 to eliminate the terms main rod and auxiliary rod, instead using terms “first rod,” “second rod” and “third rod” in a manner that is consistent with the usage of these terms in the specification. Accordingly, Applicants submit that the claim terminology is no longer confusing, and respectfully request that the rejection under 35 U.S.C. § 112 be withdrawn.

Objected Claims

Applicants thank the Examiner for indicating that claims 7 - 9 are objected to as being dependent on rejected base claim 1, but would be allowable if rewritten in independent form to include all of the limitations of base claim 1, and if rewritten to overcome the above-described rejection under 35 U.S.C. § 112. As described above, Applicants cancel claim 8 without prejudice or disclaimer, amend claim 1 to essentially include the limitations of canceled claim 8, and amend claims 1, 7 and 9 to eliminate the claims terms leading to the rejection under 35 U.S.C. § 112. As claim 1 has been rewritten to essentially incorporate the limitations of allowable claim 8, Applicants respectfully submit that amended claim 1 is in condition for allowance. As amended claims 7 and 9 depend from allowable claim 1, Applicants further submit that dependent claims 7 and 9 are allowable for at least this reason. As dependent claim 8 has been canceled, the objection as to claim 8 is moot. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully request that the objections as to claims 7 - 9 be withdrawn.

Claim Rejections under 35 U.S.C. §§ 102, 103

Claims 1 - 3, 5, 10 and 11 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by Kouketsu et al. (U.S. 4,607,864). Claims 4 and 6 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Kouketsu in view of Collinset al. (U.S. 5,411,292). Applicants respectfully traverse these rejections.

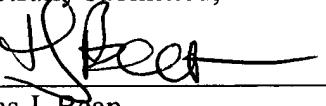
Applicants cancel claims 2, 5, and 6 without prejudice or disclaimer, amend independent claim 1 to essentially incorporate the limitations of allowable claim 8, and amend dependent claims 3, 4, 10 and 11 to be consistent with the amendments made to amended claim 1. As described above, Applicants submit that amended independent claim 1, essentially including the limitations of allowable claim 8, is accordingly allowable. As dependent claims 3, 4, 10 and 11 depend from allowable independent claim 1, Applicants submit that dependent claims 3, 4, 10 and 11 are also allowable for at least this reason.

CONCLUSION

In view of the above amendments and remarks, Applicants believe the pending application, including independent claim 1 and dependent claims 3, 4, 7 and 9 - 11, is in condition for allowance. If there are any issues remaining which the Examiner believes could be resolved through either a Supplemental Response or an Examiner's Amendment, the Examiner is kindly requested to contact the undersigned at the telephone number indicated below.

Dated: May 25, 2006

Respectfully submitted,

By 

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